

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Commerce Secretary Gary Locke today declared that last year's federal fishery resource disaster and commercial fishery failure will both be extended through 2009.

A total of \$53 million in relief funds for West Coast fisheries remains from last year's disaster declaration, including \$46 million for California. The declaration also opens up paths to additional emergency relief money.

Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) released the following statement:

"We've already seen our local commercial Chinook season canceled, the third fishery closure in as many years. The federal relief funds that come from these disaster declarations are vital to the families who depend on fishing for their livelihood.

"I'm working with state and federal officials to make sure our fishermen are taken care of during this crisis. It's critical that funds left over from last year's declaration are quickly released. At that time, the Department of Commerce must reassess the situation and determine if further emergency funds are necessary.

"The collapse of West Coast salmon fisheries points to the need for a long-term solution to this problem. We desperately need a comprehensive national ocean policy to provide federal agencies with a framework to effectively manage our ocean resources."

# # #